

## PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF TENNIS

### How Does Exercise Cause Psychological Changes?

Many theories about the psychological benefits of exercise have surfaced from exercise physiology and sport psychology. One common area of study is neurochemistry. Scientists believe that when exercising, chemicals called endorphins are produced in the brain and released into the body.

Endorphins are thought to relieve stress and pain naturally, giving one a euphoric and invigorating feeling. Other theories focus more on the indirect effects of exercise. A popular opinion is that exercise may create a distraction and provide an outlet from everyday sources of stress, therefore positively enhancing one's mental condition.

Also, another thought is that muscle tension tends to be reduced after a good exercise session and this can promote a feeling of relaxation and calmness.

### What are the Psychological Benefits of Exercise?

- **Decreased Daily and Chronic Stress:** Exercise is one of the best ways to decrease stress. As stated above, exercise can help relieve stress by the release of endorphins and/or by creating an outlet from daily tension and anxiety. With less stress, many individuals will begin to feel more energised and alive.
- **Improved Self-Confidence and Body Image:** Today, many people are unhappy with their physical appearance. By exercising regularly, most people will begin to see positive physical change. When individuals start seeing these results, they tend to be proud of their success and feel good about who they are. Many times this enhances body image perception and self-confidence.

- **Enhanced Moods:** Exercise makes most people feel good and when people feel good, their moods seem to elevate. Whether this is due to the release of endorphins or providing a distraction from daily stress, many studies show that regular exercise gives people a more positive outlook and are happier overall in comparison to the inactive population.
- **Alleviate Depression:** Studies show that regular exercise can greatly alleviate and, in some cases, prevent the symptoms of depression. The exact physiological reason is unknown, but scientists believe that enhancing body image, elevating moods and improving one's health and physical appearance can all help boost self-confidence and create a feeling of success, therefore alleviating depression symptoms.
- **Increased Mental Alertness:** Stress and fatigue negatively affect concentration, comprehension and memory. Since exercise is a great way to alleviate stress and increase energy levels, a regular exercise routine will enhance mental alertness and can improve overall mental health. Additionally, regular exercise has been demonstrated to strengthen areas of the brain that mediate memory.
- **Feeling Great Overall:** One of the best psychological benefits of exercise is just feeling great overall. One could argue that this is a physical benefit of exercise, however the psychological benefits greatly contribute to this overall great feeling. The combination of increased self-confidence, decreased stress, better moods, less depression and increased mental health in addition to all of the physical benefits should make anyone feel great.

Regardless of why or how the body psychologically adapts to exercise, the main point is that exercise not only improves physical health, but also mental health. Uniting the physical and psychological benefits of exercise will help enhance the quality of life.